

(Washington, DC) - **Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA), Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health**, released the following statement on President Obama's address to a Joint Session of Congress this evening:

"In tonight's speech to Congress, President Obama rightly noted that the United States is facing serious challenges both at home and abroad. I agree with his point that we can overcome these challenges by uniting to find commonsense solutions that will restore our economy, create jobs, and bolster our citizen's faith in America.

"While we face critical issues here at home, I'm pleased that President Obama made special mention brave men and women in uniform doing the brave work of protecting our security in Iraq and Afghanistan. I strongly support them and their mission and I believe that we must ensure that they have the tools necessary for victory. I hope that President Obama will submit a budget that includes these incredibly important funds.

"I support the President's call to cut the deficit and regain our fiscal responsibility. Unfortunately, recently, Washington has gone on a spending spree that America hasn't seen since the Carter Administration. Ten days ago the 'so-called' stimulus bill passed with a price tag of nearly one trillion dollars. Sadly that's just a warm up for the additional half-trillion dollars of spending in a bill that will be debated on the House Floor this week. Increased spending and bigger government won't solve our problems; it will only make things worse.

"While I agree with the President that our health care system is broken, I am concerned by his comments that indicate a slow move toward government run health care. This Congress has already moved to include children from families that don't need assistance in a health care program designed for poor children. What we need is a concerted effort to make health care more affordable and more accessible. I strongly oppose plans that will take health care decisions out of the hands of doctors and patients and put them in the hands of faceless bureaucrats.

"I look forward to working with President Obama to eliminate our record deficits and restore our economy. I urge President Obama to join the call for a spending freeze. We must work together to help lift the burden on small businesses, the backbone of economic growth in America, and seek fiscally responsible ways to lower our deficit. And I believe that we must

commit to tax relief, not tax hikes. The American people have the strength and ingenuity to lift our country out of this recession if only Washington would get out of the way."